

CHRIST THE KING PROTECTS HIS KINGDOM

Genesis 14:14-20

TEXT: *After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

What value is there for you to gather together here this morning to hear another account from ancient history dating back 4000 years? Just as we are 2000 AD, Abraham was 2000 BC.

What can this piece of history do for you as a Christian living in today's world? Is this not the same Christ whose name we worship as Jesus, the Christ of God? Then what this very same Christ did for Abraham, He continues to do for His Church even today. Let us learn that CHRIST THE KING PROTECTS HIS KINGDOM. I. The Lord protected Abraham because of His Promise of the Savior; and, II. Abraham was blessed because God keeps His promises.

I cannot see that Abraham's world was any less dangerous than is our world today. Today, our nation is at war, not with a particular country, but with an ancient religion dating back to the 7th Century, AD, and their ideology that is one of murder and slavery. The Islamic militants began conquering lands in North Africa, along the Mediterranean, Spain and Italy. When they captured Holy Land and took Jerusalem, European countries encouraged by the Roman Popes began the Crusades to win them back from the Muslim. In the days of the Reformation, Martin Luther included prayers and hymns that prayed not only that the Lord protect them from the Church's spiritual enemy, the Pope, but from their earthly enemy, the Turk, or Muslim.

Abraham had followed the Lord's command to travel to Canaan, where he lived as a nomad. While he tried to live in peace, political intrigue and warring kings touched his life when they captured Sodom and took his nephew Lot captive. It was no coincidence that when this happened, we are told: ***When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit...*** These 318 ***trained men born in his household*** were trained for a purpose. These were Abraham's personal body guard, his own militia, trained to protect him and his amazing wealth and family. There were ***trained men born in his household*** which made them extremely loyal, and without doubt shared the same faith and hope of their spiritual father, Abraham, who had taught them about the Promise that the Lord had given him that ***all families on earth will be blessed through*** him, that the Savior of the world was to come through Abraham.

It was this great Promise upon which Abraham could stand. Since the Savior of the world depended on Abraham's survival, the Promised Christ would surely protect him from all danger.

Now that great Promise has been fulfilled. Christ protected His Kingdom and Abraham's household so that 2000 years later Jesus would be born, the Descendant of Abraham, and go to war against a greater enemy than all the Canaanites, all the Muslims, all the kings and powers of this world. Jesus would go to war against Satan, sin and death. On the cross he would declare: ***It is finished! Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...*** and on the third day, rise again from death to proclaim the victory before the eyes of all the world.

Today, 2000 years after Christ's resurrection, battles continue to be fought and won by Christ who has sent His Holy Spirit out into the world wrapped up in pulpits where the Gospel is proclaimed, and in congregations where Holy Baptism claims, not lands, but souls for the Kingdom of God. Christian soldiers are strengthened and armed by Christ as we receive him into our bodies and souls by eating and drinking His true Body and Blood in His Holy Supper.

Today, history is repeated again as Christ the King Protects His Kingdom gathered here in Saginaw, because the Savior has so promised. And as with Abraham, we enjoy the blessings of Christ's Kingdom because the Lord keeps His Promises.

Abraham won the victory, saved Lot and his wife and daughters, and all that had been captured by these ancient terrorists. Because the Lord keeps His promises, Abraham was blessed. Another king, a fellow Christian, of whom little is known except what is revealed in the Bible, was Melchizedek: ***Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."*** Yes, Abraham was indeed blessed! But as Melchizedek also declares, ***blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.*** Even in this earthly strife, God keeps His promises and protects His Kingdom.

As 21st Century members of this same Kingdom of God, standing on the same Promise of Christ's victory, and sharing in this fellowship by faith in Jesus, we can be certain that this same Christ will keep all His promises to us, even in the midst of our earthly hardships and strife. Abraham wasn't looking for trouble. Trouble came to him. Abraham didn't need an army, because he had the Promise of God, but he kept an army because the Lord expects us to use our God-given reason and strength as we live in the confidence of His Word and Promise. It is the Lord who has taught us to pray: ***Give us this day our daily bread...*** and, ***Deliver us from evil...*** and if He has so taught us to pray, we trust that He will surely answer our prayers.

Concerning the members of His Kingdom, He has promised, in the words of Paul: ***You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*** 2 Co 9. Tell me how we should apply this promise to our work here at St. John's. Either ignore it or believe it. Either goes forward with the work placed before us, or cower and tremble with anxieties and fears. Believe me, throughout my own ministry I've had to go back again and again to these same Scriptures and then declare what old pastors told me when I was a young pastor: The Lord always makes things work out -- to the good of His Kingdom and those who love Him.

Abraham responded to Melchizedek's godly praise with an offering: ***Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*** No one told him to do this. It was simply a response of his faith, trust and thanksgiving. Even today you will respond with a gift of faith, trust and thanksgiving, not because anyone has told you to do this, but because, like Abraham, you know that Christ the King protects His Kingdom, and you are members of the Kingdom of God just like Abraham. So our offerings today are a part of our worship. They are not "dues" or money we give because "the church needs them." They are our response of faith in the Promises of God that have been made to us, and are trusted by us because God always keeps His Word.

It's amazing how world history repeats itself. Man is sinful and will always be sinful. But Christ Who protects His Kingdom always will protect you. That also will be repeated again and again in each of our lives until He comes again on the Last Day! Praise God, the God of Abraham, and our God! Amen.